Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A system for providing flexible message-based communications over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:

~~a controller to process a plurality of symmetric digital voice messages; and~~ a controller, comprising:

an interface to a plurality of devices interconnected over a digital data network, each device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other device;

a security module configured to provide security to digital voice messages exchanged with each device by applying encryption using a key unique to each of the devices;

an access module configured to process a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the devices; and

a session module configured to form a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one device and, for each of the voice message sessions, to add the user associated with the at least one device to a discussion group; and

a voice message server configured to centrally transact ~~one or more~~ the voice message ~~sessions over a digital data network,~~ sessions, comprising:

a message queue configured to receive the digital voice messages for the at least one device, to associate a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each of the digital voice messages, and to transiently store ~~each such~~ the digital voice ~~message; and~~ messages; and

a queue manager ~~to logically interconnect a plurality of devices by routing each~~ configured to route the transiently stored digital voice ~~message between the interconnected devices.~~ messages to another of the devices,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one device and each other of the devices in the discussion groups.

2. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

~~a session manager to manage each voice message sessions, comprising:~~

~~an authentication component to process an operation by at least one such device selected from the group comprising at least one of a sign-in and a sign-out; and~~

a message router to perform store-and-forward processing of the transiently stored digital voice messages.

Claim 3 (cancelled).

4. (original) A system according to Claim 1, wherein the devices are grouped in a relationship selected from the group comprising one of a one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many.

Claim 5 (cancelled).

6. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a storage device configured to persistently store each such digital voice message.

7. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a voice processing component configured to process analog voice into the digital voice messages.

8. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 7, further comprising:

a speech recognition component configured to transcribe the digital voice messages using the device.

9. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 7, further comprising:

a speech recognition component configured to transcribe the digital voice messages using a proxy voice server interfaced to the device over a voice network.

10. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 7, further comprising:

a speech recognition component configured to transcribe the digital voice messages using translation logic integrated into the device.

11. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 7, further comprising:

a voice communications interface configured to concurrently transact voice communications over a voice network relative to the voice message session.

12. (currently amended) A method for providing flexible message-based communications over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:

interfacing a plurality of devices over a digital data network, each device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other device;

providing security to digital voice messages exchanged with each device by applying encryption using a key unique to each of the devices;

processing a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the devices;

forming a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one device and, for each of the voice message sessions, adding the user associated with the at least one device to a discussion group; and

~~processing a plurality of symmetric digital voice messages; and~~

centrally transacting ~~one or more~~ the voice message ~~sessions over a digital data network,~~ sessions, comprising:

receiving the digital voice messages for the at least one device;

associating a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each of the digital voice messages;

transiently storing ~~each such~~ the digital voice ~~message; and~~ messages; and

~~logically interconnecting a plurality of devices by~~ routing ~~each~~ the transiently stored digital voice ~~message between the interconnected devices.~~ messages to another of the devices,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one device and each other of the devices in the discussion groups.

13. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising:

~~managing each voice message sessions, comprising:~~

~~processing an operation by at least one such device selected from the group comprising at least one of a sign-in and a sign-out; and~~

performing store-and-forward processing of the transiently stored digital voice messages.

Claim 14 (cancelled).

15. (original) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising:

grouping the devices in a relationship selected from the group comprising one of a one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many.

Claim 16 (cancelled).

17. (original) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising:

persistently storing each such digital voice message.

18. (original) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising:

processing analog voice into the digital voice messages.

19. (original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
converting analog voice signals into the digital voice messages using the device.

20. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
transcribing analog voice signals into the digital voice messages using a proxy voice server interfaced to the device over a voice network.

21. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
transcribing analog voice signals into the digital voice messages using translation logic integrated into the device.

22. (original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
concurrently transacting voice communications over a voice network relative to the voice message session.

23. (original) A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing the method according to Claim 12.

24. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing flexible message-based communications over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:
means for interfacing a plurality of devices over a digital data network, each device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other device;
means for providing security to digital voice messages exchanged with each device by means for applying encryption using a key unique to each of the devices;
means for processing a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the devices;

means for forming a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one device and, for each of the voice message sessions, means for adding the user associated with the at least one device to a discussion group; and

~~means for processing a plurality of symmetric digital voice messages; and~~

means for centrally transacting ~~one or more~~ the voice message ~~sessions over a digital data network,~~ sessions, comprising:

means for receiving the digital voice messages for the at least one device;

means for associating a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each of the digital voice messages;

means for transiently storing ~~each such~~ the digital voice ~~message; and~~ messages; and

means for ~~logically interconnecting a plurality of devices by~~ routing ~~each~~ the transiently stored digital voice ~~message between the interconnected devices.~~ messages to another of the devices,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one device and each other of the devices in the discussion groups.

25. (currently amended) A system for providing flexible message-based communications with personal communication devices over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:

a plurality of personal communication devices configured to originate digital voice messages comprising digitized ~~voice;~~ voice, each personal communication device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other personal communication device;

a voice message server configured to communicatively interface to the one or more personal communication devices over a digital data ~~network; and~~ network, comprising:

a security module configured to provide security to the digital voice messages exchanged with each personal communication device by applying encryption using a key unique to each of the personal communication devices;

an access module configured to process a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the personal communication devices;

a session module configured to form a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one personal communication device and, for each of the voice message sessions, to add the user associated with the at least one personal communication device to a discussion group; and

a queue manager to centrally process the digital voice messages, comprising:

a receiver module configured to receive each digital voice message from at least one such personal communication device;

an identification module configured to associate a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each digital voice message;

a message queue configured to transiently store the digital voice message; and

a sender module configured to send the digital voice message to at least one such personal communication device identified in the digital voice ~~message.~~ message,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one personal communication device and each other of the personal communication devices in the discussion groups.

26. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 25, further comprising:

a database manager configured to interface to a plurality of databases, comprising:

a user and discussion group database configured to store session information;

a personal information database configured to store personal information;

a control module configured to provide an interface authenticating at least one personal communication device against the personal information; and

a queue manager configured to stage each such digital voice message and to forward the digital voice message based on the session information.

27. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 25, further comprising:

a proxy message server configured to communicatively interface a personal communication device with the voice message server.

28. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 25, further comprising:

a cellular telephone configured to integrate with at least one such personal communication device.

29. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 25, wherein the one or more personal communication devices further comprise:

a voice message module configured to digitize [[the]] spoken voice messages;

a message storage module configured to store transient spoken voice messages, comprising:

a buffer configured to assemble outgoing spoken voice messages;

a message queue configured to transitorily store the outgoing spoken voice messages; and

a message store configured to persistently store saved spoken voice messages.

30. (currently amended) A method for providing flexible message-based communications with personal communication devices over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:

originating digital voice messages comprising digitized voice through a plurality of personal communication ~~devices;~~ devices, each personal communication device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other personal communication device;

communicatively interfacing the one or more personal communication devices over a digital data ~~network; and~~ network, comprising:

providing security to the digital voice messages exchanged with each personal communication device by applying encryption using a key unique to each of the personal communication devices;

processing a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the personal communication devices;

forming a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one personal communication device and, for each of the voice message sessions, adding the user associated with the at least one personal communication device to a discussion group; and

centrally processing the digital voice messages, comprising:

receiving each digital voice message from at least one ~~such~~ personal communication device;

associating a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each digital voice message;

transiently storing the digital voice message; and

sending the digital voice message to at least one ~~such~~ personal communication device identified in the digital voice ~~message.~~ message,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one personal communication device and each other of the personal communication devices in the discussion groups.

31. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 30, further comprising:

interfacing to a plurality of databases, comprising:

maintaining a user and discussion group database to store session information;

maintaining a personal information database to store personal information;

providing an interface authenticating at least one personal communication device against the personal information; and

staging each ~~such~~ digital voice message and to forward the digital voice message based on the session information.

32. (original) A method according to Claim 30, further comprising:

communicatively interfacing a personal communication device with the voice message server through a proxy message server.

33. (original) A method according to Claim 30, further comprising:

integrating a cellular telephone with at least one such personal communication device.

34. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 30, wherein the one or more personal communication devices further comprise:

digitizing [[the]] spoken voice messages;

storing transient spoken voice messages, comprising:

assembling outgoing spoken voice messages;

transitorily storing the outgoing spoken voice messages; and

persistently storing saved spoken voice messages.

35. (original) A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing the method according to Claim 30.

36. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing flexible message-based communications with personal communication devices over a centralized messaging infrastructure, comprising:

means for originating digital voice messages comprising digitized voice through a plurality of personal communication ~~devices;~~ devices, each personal communication device being physically located at a location distinctly removed from each other personal communication device;

means for communicatively interfacing the one or more personal communication devices over a digital data ~~network; and~~ network, comprising:

means for providing security to the digital voice messages exchanged with each personal communication device means for by applying encryption using a key unique to each of the personal communication devices;

means for processing a sign-in requested by a user via at least one of the personal communication devices;

means for forming a plurality of voice message sessions for the user associated with the at least one personal communication device and, for each of the voice message sessions, means for adding the user associated with the at least one personal communication device to a discussion group; and

means for centrally processing the digital voice messages, comprising:

means for receiving each digital voice message from at least one such personal communication device;

means for associating a user identifier and a discussion group identifier with each digital voice message;

means for transiently storing the digital voice message; and

means for sending the digital voice message to at least one such personal communication device identified in the digital voice ~~message.~~ message,

wherein logical participation in a plurality of the discussion groups is provided through exchange of the digital voice messages between the at least one personal communication device and each other of the personal communication devices in the discussion groups.